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AMERICAN ART NEWS

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GO EASY, GENTLEMEN

It is fervently to be hoped that factional spirit between the Radicals and the Conservatives, which reared its head in the newly formed Art League at its first annual meeting in the Fine Arts Building last Sunday, will not be allowed to interfere with the important work which that body came into existence to accomplish.

The League, if it is to be anything at all, must not be a cultural institution, like the National Academy of Design or the Society of Independent Artists. It should have nothing to do with the dogmas or the "isms" of art. It should be a body of artists intent upon securing those things which will benefit all artists alike, no matter whether they belong to the "Bolshevik" or the "Menshevik."

Bitterness of faction and bitterness of temperament should be suppressed even if it chokes an artist or two. It is much better than some individual artist should choke on his own pent-up feelings than that he should let his spleen choke an institution such as the Art League.

One of the great objects of the League is to obtain the erection of a Fine Arts Palace in New York city, which shall be ample for the exhibitions of all groups and societies of artists, regardless of their "isms" or poverty of "isms." How can a hair-pulling mob inspire sufficient confidence in the public to obtain the money for such an enterprise? The place for hair, in this case, is in the mortar.

And yet, no sooner had the session adjourned Sunday, than there began to be talk that the meeting was "packed" and threats were uttered of "withdrawal." Seeds of dissension had been sown, and had matured with the alacrity of a Hindu magician's bamboo tree.

The Conservatives claimed that, whereas they had started the League and had invited the Radicals to come in and work with them for the common good, the latter had stolen a march on them, "packed" the meeting, over-ridden the constitution of the League and by so doing entrenched themselves in absolute control. It was asserted that, contrary to the constitution, the Radicals had proposed a roll of about 500 new members, and, in spite of opposition, had elected them.

THE ART NEWS has nothing to say about the merits of the case. If the Radicals actually did "pack" the meeting and act in defiance of the League's constitution, they are

the last persons in the world who should do such a thing. Folks who have been yelling for air, shouldn't begin to strangle somebody else the moment they obtain it.

Go easy, gentlemen. Forget your differences. Look further than the ends of your own noses. If your pictures and your sculptures please the present generation, they will buy them, and what you all want is the best possible means of a public hearing. If your pictures and your sculptures are worthy to survive in coming generations, they will survive. But no matter whether they do or not, the Art League has a chance to do some work that is sure to survive for centuries. Your personal hobbies and your group "isms" are utterly insignificant as compared with the work you can do collectively through the Art League.

Be big enough to get back together, and work together until you have accomplished your collective objects.

ART IN THE CABINET

It would be a fitting climax to the remarkable growth of art sentiment and art appreciation in this country, which has been steadily asserting itself for several years but which in the last two years has come into positive fruition, if success should mark the present effort of artists and art lovers to obtain the establishment at Washington of a Department of the Fine Arts, whose head should have a seat in the President's cabinet.

Such a department could have manifold functions, both in guiding the government in such of its activities as have to do with art, and in furthering art education and art development among the people. But its most far reaching and immediate effect would be the dignity and importance which its very existence would confer upon art as an element in the lives of the American people.

There is no reason why the United States should not recognize the affairs of art as a vital branch of the administrative government. France has its Minister of the Fine Arts, and as this country has always looked to France for artistic guidance, it is appropriate that it should follow such precedence now.

America is experiencing a veritable "art awakening." There is scarcely a small city in the land that has not an energetic and organized coterie of art patrons. New museums are springing up in almost unheard of places. Art schools are being founded everywhere. Arts and crafts are obtaining a consideration in industry never dreamed of before. All of this is an indication of a tremendous undercurrent of appreciation for the beautiful. It means, let us hope, that the nation will never again shame lovers of art for its indifferent taste. By all means let us have a post for art in the cabinet.

OUR AUCTION REPORTS

Readers of THE ART NEWS will notice that with this week's issue a method has been inaugurated for the systematic report of art auction results on a scale that no publication has ever before attempted. The auction room has assumed an insistent degree of importance in American art, and news of the sales, we feel, will be appreciated both by connoisseurs and dealers.

If the reports that will be printed henceforth in THE ART NEWS be clipped out and pasted in the catalogues of the sales they will make invaluable documents for the future. Reference to the displayed announcements of the auction houses in our advertising columns and to the subsequent reports in the news columns will keep the American art public fully informed on auction matters.

Kansas City Is Looking for a Director for Its Art Museum

The Kansas City Art Institute is looking for a competent director to take charge of its rapidly growing museum, to succeed Mr. Virgil Barker, who wishes to retire in order to devote himself entirely to writing.

In the course of a letter to THE ART NEWS, Mr. Barker says:

"I am naturally interested in securing a proper person to succeed me as director here. There is unquestionably a great future ahead for this institution, and the possibilities are such as offer an unequalled opportunity for an energetic museum man.

"There will be a meeting very shortly of

the officers of the board of trustees to frame a definite proposition, which is sure to prove attractive. I hope you can find space in the next number of THE ART NEWS to make mention of this fact, in the hope of attracting the attention of some capable man who could be interested in this exceptional opportunity."

Forbes Watson Banquetted in Dallas at Opening of Show

DALLAS, Texas.—The Spring exhibition of the Dallas Art Association opened with a banquet Thursday night, followed by a private view of the paintings. The banquet was given in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Forbes Watson, of New York.

Mr. Watson is the art critic who assembled the exhibition and Mrs. Watson is an artist. She accompanied Mr. Watson in order to paint the wild flowers of Texas.

At the banquet there were present those devotees of the fine arts in Dallas who have made this Spring exhibition possible.

Dr. Rosenbach Buys Shelley Book at Sotheby Auction for £1,750

Mr. Philip Rosenbach, of the Rosenbach Company, has received a cablegram from his brother, Dr. Rosenbach, saying that the firm had obtained at Sotheby's on Wednesday, for £1,750, a notebook of Shelley, containing in autograph "A Philosophical View of Reform." A landscape drawing is on the front cover of the book, while rough sketches occur throughout it.

Buys \$20,000 Stolen Statue for \$50

ROTTERDAM.—After several adventures a statuette by Benvenuto Cellini has been reclaimed. This statuette, valued at about \$20,000, was sent from Lucerne to a dealer at The Hague. It was stolen on the way and had been missing since May, 1920. The police here recently found it in the possession of a provision dealer, who admitted that he had bought it from a person unknown to him for \$50.

Kouchakji Recovers from Operation

Mr. F. Kouchakji, of the firm of Kouchakji Freres, dealers in antiquities at No. 707 Fifth avenue, who recently underwent an operation at the Long Island College hospital, has recovered and is now back in the galleries.

Obituary

MRS. SILAS DUSTIN

Artist friends of Silas Dustin deeply sympathize with him in the loss of his gifted and helpful wife, who died at their Chelsea studio on April 1. Her body was taken to Westport, Conn., where they have lived for a number of years, for burial. Mrs. Dustin was a woman of charming personality and rare intelligence and was instinctively artistic. She will be missed by the Westport art colony, as well as by a large number of friends.

MARCUS STONE

Marcus Stone, a veteran English painter, died in London on March 25. He had been a regular contributor to the Royal Academy exhibitions for sixty-three consecutive years and was well known as an exhibitor in Paris, Berlin and Vienna, and in Philadelphia and Chicago. He won many honors and medals. His work was mainly figures, which he invested with human interest. He also did historical subjects.

LOUIS KURZ

Louis Kurz, well known mural painter, one of the founders of the Art Institute, Chicago, died at his home in that city on March 21. He was eighty-seven years old, and in his youth was a friend of Lincoln, Logan and Longfellow. A native of Austria, he came to this country in 1848. He fought for the North in the Civil War, in which he won honors for bravery, and he had the confidence of President Lincoln. He was especially known for his murals, which adorn many churches throughout the West. Mr. Kurz was elected a member of the National Academy at an early age and later became interested in the Chicago Institute. His son, Louis Kurz, Jr., is also an artist.

HENDRICKS A. HALLETT

Hendricks A. Hallett, of Boston, died at his home, No. 91 Winfred Road, on March 17. He was well known as a marine painter and had exhibited throughout New England in various galleries. Of especial interest were his historical subjects, in which he recorded various types of ships and notable events. He was born in Charlestown in 1847, was American taught and was considered a fine colorist. His watercolors were said to be among the best of American works in that medium.

SIR MOSES EZEKIEL

The body of Sir Moses Ezekiel, a sculptor of international fame, who died in Rome, Italy, in 1917, was removed to the Arlington National Cemetery, March 30, and buried with becoming honors. He was born in Richmond, Va., in 1844.

WOMEN LAUNCH AN INSURRECTION

Revolt Against Jury System Begun by Miss Ketcham in Association of Women Painters and Sculptors

The war that began in the Women Painters' and Sculptors' Association about three years ago, between factions, one of which favored making it a rule that each member should be entitled to hang at least one picture at the annual exhibition, and the other demanded that the present jury system be continued, has been gathering force and now appears to be reaching a white heat which nothing will cool except a pitched battle to prove the right of the fittest to survive. The great drama has been staged for next Wednesday when the annual meeting will take place.

The dissatisfaction in the association was first aired when in 1918 Caroline Bean protested because her pictures, after being accepted by the jury, were not hung because of "lack of space" and this when they had the three large galleries of the Fine Arts Building. It was contended then that batik draperies and other interior decorator's merchandise occupied a great part of the wall space, crowding out many "accepted" pictures.

The leader of the present fight is Susan M. Ketcham, one of the founders and the oldest member of the association, whose work has been rejected for the last two years. Miss Ketcham and her friends believe that the "jury system" should be used before an artist is admitted into the organization, and that when her work is finally passed upon as conforming to the necessary standard, she should be permitted to reap some benefit from the society as long as she helps to support it financially.

Miss Ketcham has sent out a circular letter asking the opinion of every member and a proxy for those who live out of the city or for any reason cannot attend the meeting, to vote on the "no jury" measure when it comes up. She has already received so many favorable replies, and the other side is becoming so determined in opposition that the fight promises to be a memorable one.

The insurgent faction contends that if an artist's work is beneath the association's standard of quality it is dishonest to take her money for the association's support. The other faction contends that a jury is the only system by which any art organization can maintain its standard.

Miss Ketcham's letter follows:

"Much dissatisfaction has been expressed because of the proportionally small representation (about one-third) of members in the annual exhibition of the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors.

"It is believed that a majority of the members would like to have the privilege of exhibiting at least one picture at the annual show. This would be possible if a motion were passed to that effect at the annual meeting in April. You are urged to be present and cast your vote on the measure, as a majority is necessary.

"Are you in favor of—and would vote—for a motion, as follows:

"Be it moved that at the annual exhibition every member be privileged to exhibit one picture, not to exceed in size, including frame, 25 x 30. Other pictures of any size may be submitted to the jury, the jury to choose from the small pictures and others presented, the one for the exhibit; also to pass on others to be hung at the discretion of the hanging committee."

"Kindly inform Miss Susan M. Ketcham, 1010 Carnegie Hall, New York City, whether you will be present at the meeting and vote for such a measure.

"If you are in favor, but unable to attend the next annual meeting personally, please sign the proxy and mail it to Miss Ketcham."

Olesen Landscapes Are Shown as They Would Look in Home

At the van Boskerck Studios, No. 76 Washington place, Olaf Olesen has ably demonstrated the possibility of "placing the easel picture back on the wall."

Mr. Olesen was introduced to the New York art public by Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney through an exhibition of his work at the Whitney Studio Club last winter, and the hanging of twenty-two of his paintings at the van Boskerck Studios, as they would appear on the wall of the home, shows that he has succeeded in varied emotional expressions, within the restraint of decorative demands.

This painter's intimate knowledge of nature and his mastery of composition, make it possible for him to simplify a landscape, eliminating all non-essentials, obtaining by this synthesis a pure art, which potentially renders the mood of nature and possesses an aesthetic appeal, unobtrusive at first glance, but gaining in power and depth of impression—qualities pertaining to all great art.